



**U.S. Department of Justice
U.S. Attorney's Office
Western District of Texas**

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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MEXICAN MAFIA VICE PRESIDENT SENTENCED TO 25 YEARS IN FEDERAL PRISON

United States Attorney Johnny Sutton announced today that Daniel Leza (a.k.a. "Gumby"), Vice President of the Texas Mexican Mafia in San Antonio, was sentenced this morning to 25 years in federal prison for conspiracy to distribute heroin and cocaine and conspiracy to commit money laundering.

"Tonight, San Antonio is safer because one of the top leaders of the Texas Mexican Mafia, a brutal prison gang, is now off the streets for good," stated United States Attorney Johnny Sutton.

Pleading guilty on September 29, 2004, Leza admitted that for five years beginning in August 1999, he conspired with others to: 1) obtain large amounts of heroin and cocaine for further distribution and sale; 2) control the distribution of heroin and cocaine by restricting drug trafficking among non-Texas Mexican Mafia members to those who paid extortion fees or a "tax;" 3) protect "authorized" drug distributors from robbery, violence and competition; and, 4) using violence in all forms and degrees to enforce the Texas Mexican Mafia drug distribution "tax."

During the time of the conspiracy, authorities estimate that the organization was responsible for distributing over 150 kilograms of cocaine and over 30 kilograms of heroin. During the investigation, authorities also seized approximately 80 firearms and approximately \$50,000 in cash.

In addition to Leza, Judge Garcia sentenced Mexican Mafia soldier David Merlo this afternoon to 13 years in federal prison for conspiracy to distribute heroin. Leza and Merlo are two of 28 defendants convicted and the ninth and tenth defendants, respectively, to be sentenced to federal prison as a result of this indictment.

This Organized Crime/Drug Enforcement Task Force (OCDETF) case resulted from a year-long investigation conducted by the Drug Enforcement Administration Task Force and the Bexar County Sheriff's Department with assistance from the Texas Department of Criminal Justice, Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives and the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement. The DEA Task Force is comprised of law enforcement officers from the Alamo Area Narcotics Task Force, San Antonio Police Department, Comal County Sheriff's Office, Guadalupe County Sheriff's Office, Kerr County Sheriff's Office, Kerrville Task Force, Leon Valley Police Department, New Braunfels Police Department, Schertz Police Department, Seguin Police Department and the Bexar County District Attorney's Office. Assistant United States Attorney Joey Contreras and Joe Sepeda are prosecuting this case on behalf of the Government.

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